

## Heartless Bosses?

by *Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves*

Considering the mountains of literature about emotional intelligence, you'd think corporate executives would be pretty smart about it. But our research shows that the message still isn't getting through. During the past five years, we have measured emotional intelligence in more than 100,000 senior executives (including 1,000 CEOs), managers, and line employees across industries on six continents. For each respondent, we measured self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management, and relationship-management skills to yield a cumulative EQ (or "emotional intelligence quotient") score on a 100-point scale.

As the exhibit below shows, EQ scores rise as executives climb the ladder, peaking at the manager level, falling off thereafter, and bottoming out, alarmingly, at the CEO level. (Though the absolute difference between the highest and lowest scores is only seven points, this is a highly significant statistical difference.)

How could it be that the very people who need emotional intelligence the most seem to have it the least? It appears that companies are still promoting executives principally on the basis of what they know or on how long they've served the company rather than on their ability to lead. Yet, for every job we've studied, emotional intelligence is a better predictor of performance than technical skill, experience, or intellect—confirming what psychologist Dan Goleman and others in the field of emotional intelligence have been saying for years.

If you're in the rarefied ranks of C-suite executives, your subordinates are probably more emotionally intelligent than you are. That's not advantageous for you or your company. A decade of research shows that emotional intelligence can be honed—that's the good news—but first you have to recognize the need.

**Emotional Intelligence Scores  
and Job Title**



\*S core reflects a cumulative emotional intelligence quotient based on a 100-point scale.